Visit of Indian Industry delegation to the USA

756. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a first ever Indian industry delegation with focus on the defence sector visited the US in the month of May-June, 2002 to strengthen bilateral defence-industrial ties and seek new opportunities for mutually beneficial business;

(b) if so, the main topics discussed during the visits;

(c) whether any concrete agreements have been reached between India and the US on defence ties; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. A 10 Member Mission led by Chairman, Confederation of Indian Industry (CM), National Committee on Defence visited USA from 13 to 17 May 2002.

(b) This was an exploratory mission to understand US defence export policy; to publicise India's new defence industrial policy especially its desire to promote joint ventures with limited Foreign Director Investment; and to apprise the US industry of the strengths of Indian industry. All discussions related to these topics.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Weapons deal with the United States

757. SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has signed the first major weapons deal with the United States in more than three decades;

(b) if so, what are the total defence deals signed between the two countries;

(c) whether this deal was signed before the Chief Army Staff visit USA: and

(d) if so. to what extent this defence deal between the two countries have helped the capability of Indian army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b)The Governments of India and the United States signed a 'Letter of Offer and Acceptance' for supply of the Weapon Locating Radar through the Foreign Military Sales Programme of the United States in April, 2002. No other major weapons purchase has been made from the United States.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The induction of the Weapon Locating Radar will enhance the combat capability of the Indian Army.

Purchase of defence armaments and weaponry according to set guidelines

758. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "MoD on buying spree" appearing in the Statesman dated 2nd June, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure that the purchase of huge stock of defence armaments and weaponry is processed through the set procedure following all norms and guidelines laid down for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The modernization of Armed Forces is a continuous and ongoing process. The requirements of the Armed Forces are reviewed on a continuing basis for induction of modernized weapons and weapon systems keeping in view the threat perceptions and the prevailing strategic environment as also emerging technology. All the cases of procurement/ acquisition of weapons and weapon systems are processed in accordance with the prescribed procurement procedure keeping in view the budget allocation.